



Iranian EFL Teachers's Attitudes towards Lesson Planning based on Their Teaching Experience and Their Teaching Place

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ABSTRACT

Lesson plan plays an important role in supporting teaching-learning process at schools and institutes. According to the literature available, unfortunately few studies have been conducted on these issues in the context of Iran. Therefore, EFL teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning on improving teaching process seems to be neglected to some extent. Taking this existing gap, the main aim of this study was to describe English teachers' attitudes towards lesson plan based on their teaching experience and teaching place. The sample consisted 93 teachers in Ilam and Eyvan, Iran. A modified version of Ramaila and Ramnarain's (2014) questionnaire was applied in this study. This study used the descriptive design and employed quantitative approach. Data analysis was done by utilizing descriptive statistic t-test, one-way ANOVA. The findings reveal that no significant difference was observed between teachers' views concerning the given variables. Because of the importance of lesson plan, holding special workshop may provide information for developing better course plans.

Keywords: Lesson Plan, EFL Teachers, Teachers' View, Teaching Experience, Teaching Place.

Introduction

Teachers have an essential role in the society; the students' future success depends on the effective conditions of teachers. Teachers' beliefs are of considerable importance for understanding and improving educational process. They are as guides for language teachers in adopting some teaching strategies in facing their everyday teaching

challenges. They have influence on their general well-being, and give shape to the learners' motivation, learning environment, and ability and language achievement. In the process of education, learning and teaching are two dependent parts. Although teaching is a teacher's job, its result is reflected in the learner or student, thus effectiveness

should be studied from the viewpoint of teachers and students so that according to the common and different points and approximating them, more efficiency and codification of behavioral patterns of teachers in education can be achieved. A lesson plan is the set of steps or instructions used to guide a teacher or facilitator through a set of educational activities. A lesson plan helps to give clarity to the teacher/facilitator about what is expected to be achieved or learned, how this learning might be motivated and encouraged, and how long the lesson and elements within the lesson might take. Lesson planning is an important process in teacher trainees' gaining experience since it forces them to reflect on what to teach, how to teach and how to evaluate (Yildirim, 2003). Planning is an important and often underappreciated aspect of teaching practice, when teachers make decisions that ultimately impact students' opportunities to learn (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Floden *et al.*, 1980; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999).

According to (Graves, 2000), generally, a lesson plan has two functions. One is to give the lesson a framework, an overall form to ease a teacher in preparing the materials suitable for students and managing teaching-learning process in the classroom. The other function is to remind a teacher of what he is going to do, especially if he gets perplexed or temporarily forgets what he has intended. Therefore, it is a fruitful and meaningful effort if a teacher spends his energy and time on thinking and developing a lesson plan to meet the quality of teaching learning process in the classroom. (Akyel, 1997) stated that experienced teachers are not as

concerned as student teachers about adherence to rules and models in their teaching or about approval from external sources. Novice teachers, on the other hand, see learner ideas and errors as possible obstacles and focus principally on maintaining the flow of lesson plans.

(Houston & Beech, 2002) believed that since there were students with different characteristics and a range of abilities in a class, meeting the different learning needs of students could create several problems for teachers. As stated by (kame'enui & simmons, 1999, as cited in Houston & Beech, 2002), the best source of action to meet this challenge is to design effective lesson plans. (Sothayapetch *et al.*, 2013) interviewed experienced primary school teachers' regarding Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and General Pedagogical Knowledge (GPK) while teaching science in Finland and in Thailand. The data analysis revealed that the Finnish teachers had flexibility in their teaching: They did not have specific techniques to handle students; the techniques used depended on the situations occurring at the moment. There were no strict rules for student discipline in the class. (Gülten, 2013) traced the first lesson planning experience of the teacher trainees' and identified their reactions. The participants of the study were 150 second year teacher trainees studying at the English Language Teaching (ELT) department at Uludağ University, Turkey. The data were collected by means of examining the lesson plans of the teacher trainees and the analysis of their comments. It was determined that lesson planning experience had a positive impact upon the teacher trainees and enabled them to feel like

real teachers. However, the results emphasized that when planning, teacher trainees faced with problems like formulating objectives and selecting appropriate activities for certain stages. Main challenges included teacher trainees' hesitations about the process, timing difficulties, problems in sequencing and selecting activities, providing effective transitions and finding sources.

Some researchers have focused on the role of curriculum materials as a resource for teachers to draw upon when making planning decisions. For example, (McCutcheon, 1981) found that when planning for daily lessons, teachers tend to rely heavily on suggestions in the teacher's guide. In a study on one teacher's planning throughout the school year, (Clark & Elmore, 1981) found that curriculum materials were primary resources in the teacher's planning. Similarly, (Smith & Sendelbach, 1979) studied this issue at the level of teachers' unit planning. They found that teachers tended to construct a mental image or plan of the unit and then supplement their plan with notes based on the suggestions in the teacher's guide. (Gafoor & UmerFarooque, 2010) examined 74 pre-service teachers' feeling about lesson planning. The results indicated the main difficulties were as follows: choosing appropriate learning experience deciding and allotting time properly, identifying and developing proper learning aides, sequencing the lesson and specifying instructional objectives. Yazdani, Abedi, and Karamalian (2014) attempted to compare English curricula at high school with English teaching institutes. This research aimed to study and compare components of English curricula from high school teachers and

students' perspectives with English language institute instructors and learners' viewpoints. The results showed that, from the perspective of all four groups, all components of English curriculum were effective; however, such curriculum was more effective at English teaching institutes than at high school settings.

A review of existing literature on lesson plan suggested a need for further research in this field. The research on lesson planning in Iranian context seems to be inadequate and researchers have recently started its investigation. Although, some of the previous studies explored teacher's attitude towards lesson plan in different context, the previous related literature review indicated that many studies conducted on university professors and few studies included secondary school, high school or institution. The current study was conducted on secondary school, high school or institution teachers. This study aimed to replicate the same survey in a different context in Ilam, focusing on variables such as teaching place (secondary school, high school and institute) and teaching experience (1-10 years and 11-30 years).

The present study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning and their length of teaching experience?
2. Is there any significant relationship between teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning and their teaching place?

There are two research hypotheses:

1. There is a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning and their length of teaching experience.

2. There is a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning and their teaching place.

Methodology

The participants of the study were 93 teachers who were teaching at secondary, high schools or institutions in Eyvan and Ilam, west of Iran in 2015. Because this study investigated teachers' views according to certain variables including teaching experience and teaching place, it aimed to base the study on a relatively wide and representative sample to include both of mentioned variables.

Table 1. Characteristics of participants of the study according to the variables

Variable	Categories	Number of Participants
Teaching experience	1-10 Years	48
	11-30 Years	45
Teaching Place	Secondary School	28
	High School	36
	Institution	29

As Table 1 shows, the subjects' years of teaching ranged from 1 to 30 years and was classified into 1-10 and 11-30. They were both male and females. They were at school or institute. The present study applied a modified version of the questionnaire in Likert scale which was originally developed by (Ramaila & Ramanarian, 2014). The questionnaire consists of 29 items with two

sections. Section A of the questionnaire sought information about the teacher such as teaching place, and the number of years teaching experience. Section B of the questionnaire contained statements to which teachers had to respond on a Likert scale indicating the extent to which they agreed with the statement. In this study, the reliability coefficient of questionnaire was computed by Cronbachs' alpha. The result indicated that reliability coefficient was 0.78.

Data collection lasted for over a month in late 2014. The probable needed time for filling out the questionnaire was about 10 minutes. In this study, for collecting the data, questionnaire in the form of paper and online (using email) was distributed among different English language teachers. T-test and One-way ANOVA were the two analytical procedures which were used in order to analyze the gathered data in this study. Using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16, descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and standard error of measurement were computed.

Results

In this part, the research hypotheses are considered. To investigate English teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning based on their teaching experience and their teaching place, t-test and one-way ANNOVA were used. Table 1 shows mean and standard deviation of teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning according to years of teaching experience.

Table 1. Mean and Standard deviation of teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning according to years of teaching experience

years of teaching experience	Group Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1-10 teaching experience	48	100.45	9.003	1.29
11-35 teaching experience	45	99.80	12.89	1.92

The results in Table 1 show that the mean and standard deviation for both of categories are close to each other. In order

to test teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning according to their years of teaching experience, t-test was employed.

Table 2. T-test for investigating the relationship between teaching experience and teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning

	Levene's Test Equality of Variances							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed	3.599	0.061	0.287	91	0.775	0.65833	2.29428	-3.89897
Equal variances not assumed			0.284	78.135	0.777	0.65833	2.32020	-3.96071	5.27738

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning according to their teaching place

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
High school	36	99.13	11.32	73	120
Secondary	28	99.82	12.62	68	122
Institute	29	101.68	8.92	84	118
Total	93	100.13	11.001	68	122

As it is evident from Table 3, the difference between the means and standard deviation is not great. No significant difference between them was initially expected. In order to examine our

expectation statistically, teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning according to teaching place, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run. The results are provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4. One-way analysis of variance for investigating the relationship between teaching place and teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	108.563	2	54.282	0.443	0.643
Within Groups	11026.620	90	122.518		
Total	11135.183	92			

Table 4 demonstrates the F (0.443) of teaching place and teachers' attitudes

towards lesson planning according to teaching place used by these groups.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to assess teacher's attitudes towards lesson planning in the class. Most of teachers admitted that lesson plan is important in increasing the quality of education. The main findings of the study could be discussed in the following lines.

The first finding of this study regards teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning according to their years of teaching experience. T-test was conducted to determine relationship between English teachers' attitudes and teaching experience. Participants with 1-10 years and 11-35 years of teaching experience reported similar levels of using lesson plan. Regarding our finding, there is no meaningful relationship between teaching experience and teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning, since the obtained T of these groups are 0.287, and significance level was more than 0.05, therefore the first hypothesis was rejected.

Studies have shown that experienced teachers share many attributes that distinguish them from novice teachers. (Bastick, 2002) found that experienced teachers in Jamaica were less extrinsically motivated (*e.g.* motivated by salary) and significantly intrinsically motivated (*e.g.* motivated by emotional rewards of working with children) than were novice teacher trainees. Similarly, (Bivona's, 2002) study of k-12 teachers' attitude found that teachers with more than 10 years of experience held more positive attitudes toward teaching than did less experienced teachers. In addition, (Martin *et al.*, 2006) found that experienced teachers managed their classrooms more effectively than less experienced teachers. They took more control than did novice teachers in establishing classroom routines and monitoring group work and were less controlling and reactive in

dealing with individual student behavior. Comparing experienced ESL teachers with student ESL teachers, (Akyel, 1997) found that experienced teachers considered a wider and more varied range of instructional options in response to student cues. They welcomed student initiations (*i.e.*, student questions or comments that prompt a change in the direction or topic of a lesson) because they believed this would lead to meaningful communication in the class.

The second finding of this study regards teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning according to their teaching place (school or institute). Based on the results of current study, it was found that the level of significance was more than 0.05, therefore, the second hypothesis was rejected. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference between teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning according to their teaching place, that is, teaching place is not an effective factor in teachers' attitudes towards lesson planning.

(IYazdani *et al.*, 2014) reported that the efficacy of English curriculum components at English teaching institutes are more than that of such components at high schools in Isfahan. (Taghipour, 2013) concluded a good percentage of the participants teaching at language institutes favored lesson planning, indicating that such instructional environments stress mainly upon using lesson plans by teachers in the class.

This present study explored English teachers' views according to certain variables including teaching experience and teaching place at high schools, secondary schools and institutes. Concerning teachers' views on lesson plan based on variables in this study, one-way ANOVA and t-test were used. There was no

significant difference between teachers' views on lesson plan according to both variables. In both of these variables, level of significance was more than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$) and both of the hypotheses were rejected. So, it can be claimed that there is no difference between teachers' views on lesson plan according to their teaching experience and teaching place.

By having a lesson plan, a teacher is able to manage his time, effort and resources efficiently. Furthermore, lesson plans can help teachers to achieve the goals and objectives appropriately as well as help them have great self-confidence and tackle problems. Holding seminars and workshops using national and international experts, finding the experts interested in education and hiring them as educators of education development centers are among the actions that must be taken. Using a lesson plan can help both teachers and students. Future research can augment teachers' perceptions of a lesson plan in their career from other untouched angles of look.

It is suggested to replicate this study at a national scale and cover a large number of subjects to elevate the generalizability of the findings. By conducting the same study in different cities, it can be examined whether the same results will be obtained. The instrument of this study was just limited to a questionnaire. Further studies can adopt other instruments such as interviewing teachers and students in order to understand their awareness of lesson plan.

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